Caring & Responsibility

A STATEMENT OF SOCIAL POLICY FOR ALBERTA

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

Statement of Purpose

In September last year, Premier Getty assigned me the task of developing a social policy for Alberta that would carry us through the 1990s and into the twenty-first century.

Social policy issues were examined historically in both the economic and social contexts. It became obvious that the economic and social factors were not only related but inseparable.

Success economically gives Alberta the capability to provide social programs which contribute to our quality of life. The quality and range of our social programs have a significant bearing on our ability to achieve our economic objectives.

The statement of social policy was developed, the role of government was established and 11 guiding principles were set out. All principles were reviewed and discussed, to reflect the views of appropriate committees and the Cabinet.

Albertans are a caring and responsive people, served and supported by a caring and responsive government. Albertans have consistently demonstrated their compassion for those in need, near and far, and they have expected their government to share this sense of duty and responsibility toward those who are less fortunate. Maintaining these ideals in adverse economic times has challenged both the people and the government of Alberta.

I believe that Albertans possess the spirit and the will to meet any and all challenges they face within this rapidly changing society.

The Honourable Neil Crawford
Minister of Special Projects
March 28, 1988

Albertans are fortunate to live in a province that has both strong traditions and great potential for the future. Our history is marked by enterprising individuals from a variety of cultures and backgrounds working together to build a strong Alberta. We pride ourselves on our independence, our initiative and our commitment to our nation. These strengths are vitally important as we look to the challenges of the future.

Alberta has changed dramatically since it became a province in 1905. Economic growth, particularly in the resource sector, has been very strong. Along with this growth, the number and diversity of social programs that have been developed have increased considerably. As a result, the Government of Alberta now spends approximately 77 per cent of its annual budget on social programs. Typically, social programs are thought of as social welfare or social service programs. In fact, the term "social programs" refers to those programs which have people as their major focus. In Alberta, the definition of social programs includes a very broad range of government programs and services — our excellent education system, outstanding health care, quality child care programs, varied housing programs, and employment training initiatives, plus an extensive array of cultural, multicultural and leisure programs, as well as a comprehensive system of support for Albertans who are in need.

Many of these programs and services have been designed to address and solve specific problems. The focus has been on helping Albertans in need. Consequently, we have developed an outstanding range of programs and services targeted at particular types of needs (see Appendix I)[1].

In establishing these social programs and services, Albertans have tended to regard social policy as being separate from economic policy. There must be a consistency between social and economic policies. Social policy — to be effective — should not be developed independently of the economic environment. Similarly, economic policy — to be effective — must take into account the nature, goals, values and aspirations of people. Together, they blend to create a society in which people can grow and prosper.

[1] Appendix I outlines 1988-89 projected expenditures on social programs, and illustrates the range of social programs currently provided in Alberta.

The significant downturn in Alberta's economy which occurred in the mid-1980s and other changes in Alberta society have increased our awareness of the need to review and update the social policies of this government, and the need to set a clear direction for the future. The purpose of developing a contemporary statement of social policy is to provide an umbrella for reviewing, coordinating and developing programs offered by the Government of Alberta for the people of Alberta.

This statement of government social policy and its set of principles will guide future decisions by government in these important policy areas. Within this framework, government can provide a clear and consistent direction, and move with confidence into the twenty-first century.

"Caring and Responsibility: A Statement of Social Policy for Alberta" describes this government's beliefs about its role in a supportive partnership with the people of Alberta. It is a statement that will guide our actions in providing services to Albertans. It is a statement of commitment and promise. It is challenging to government and all Albertans.

The Alberta Context

The Caring Society

Alberta has a well-known tradition of caring for people. Throughout our history, men and women have worked together, and supported and cared for each other, especially during times of adversity. This tradition of caring about people is reflected in the excellent social programs that are available in Alberta, many of which are unique in Canada.

Albertans can take pride in the significant advances that have occurred in all sectors of Alberta society, particularly since the 1960s. We have outstanding programs and services in areas such as education and health care. We have an enviable array of programs in social services and community support.

The government also has provided a range of services that are important to the general well-being of society although they are not thought of as social programs in the traditional sense. For example, a significant investment has been made in a variety of parks and recreation facilities as well as in multicultural and cultural projects which reflect the diversity of our heritage and promote the development of the arts in Alberta. Legislation has been developed for a wide range of social purposes: ensuring that the health and safety of Albertans are protected when they purchase accommodation or enter public buildings; ensuring that work sites are safe; providing standards for pensions; and protecting the environment against pollution. The government provides other services as well. Consumer courses are provided to assist individuals in the management of their personal finances. Several public agencies facilitate the participation of all Albertans in their social and economic development. The government monitors and safeguards the rights of individuals as embodied in the Individual's Rights Protection Act, and provides a vehicle for addressing these issues through the Human Rights Commission. Alberta has made good progress in the development of new labour legislation. These are but a few examples of initiatives that have contributed significantly to the well-being of Albertans and to the advancement of the quality of life in Alberta.

Because this government recognizes its role in providing special services and support to Albertans in need, it has developed important programs such as income support for people who are in severe financial need, aid to disabled people of all ages, and special assistance to the elderly and to widows and widowers. It provides counselling and support for troubled, abused and neglected children; and counselling for individuals with alcohol or drug abuse problems.

We have education, housing, and counselling programs for Native people. We have employment programs to assist individuals to enter or re-enter the job market, and housing assistance for senior citizens and low income families.

As part of the changing national and international scene, Alberta has taken a strong role in shaping national policies for Canada. Just as Alberta is not isolated from the world economic situation, Albertans have recognized the important role they can play in Canadian society and in addressing world problems. Consequently, individual Albertans consistently have demonstrated their generosity, care and compassion for people — not only in their own communities but also in developing countries — by contributing significantly to aid programs designed to address international problems of disaster, poverty and famine. The government has been highly supportive of citizen generosity and concern and has responded by matching their initiatives.

In view of the scope and variety of programs reflecting our strong tradition of caring for each other, it is not surprising that the Alberta government's per capita spending is higher than that of any other province, or of the federal government. Our commitment to addressing the needs of Albertans is clear.

The Economic Picture

Significant advances also have occurred in Alberta's economy. In the period between 1974 to 1983, Alberta's economy grew dramatically. The average year-to-year increase in the Gross Domestic Product of Alberta was 20 per cent. In roughly the same period, the number of jobs in Alberta grew by 72 per cent. Government spending, excluding Heritage Capital Fund Projects, also increased from an overall budget of $1.2 billion in 1971-72 to a 1988-89 budget estimate of more than $10.49 billion. Described in another way, in 1971-72 this government spent $742 for every person in Alberta, and by 1988-89, that per capita funding will have increased to $4,385.

Through concerted efforts, we have moved to decentralize and broaden the base of our economy. While Alberta is viewed as a province rich in natural resources which drive our economy, in fact Alberta's economy has become increasingly diverse. We have a thriving small business sector created by talented entrepreneurs and business men and women who have capitalized on opportunities available in Alberta. As a result, Alberta businesses compete internationally in world-wide markets, and are becoming increasingly involved with trading partners in Asian Pacific countries. The trade and investment environment with the United States promises to be even stronger under the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement.

Our service and tourism sectors have grown dramatically, building on the natural beauty of the province and on the hospitality, creativity and initiative of Albertans. Alberta has been building the base for a significant high technology and research industry. The work of the Alberta Research Council, of Alberta universities, and of large and small private sector high technology firms has been significant in this field, as has been the creation of the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research. In the resource-based sector of our economy, diversification also has occurred. Alberta has become a world leader in the technology of extracting and processing synthetic oil, and the petrochemical industry has grown significantly. In the agricultural sector, Alberta farmers and processors have improved their productivity and their ability to compete in the world export market. A foundation has been built for a food processing industry, for improved irrigation techniques, and for concentrated agricultural research activities.

The economic development of the province has been possible because of the initiative and productivity of well-educated and well-trained men and women who have participated fully in developing the province. The economy does not operate independently of the people who make up Alberta's businesses and industries. Indeed, it is people — Albertans with energy and drive and ideas — who develop and manage our economic resources.

Alberta now is facing major new challenges. While Alberta's economy has begun to recover and continues to have considerable potential for the future, the downturn of the mid-1980s has touched every sector of Alberta society.

The Social Aspects

Along with the growth in Alberta's economy and the expansion of government programs came growing expectations by many Albertans for services from government, for higher incomes, and for a lifestyle consistent with the province's affluence. With changes in Alberta's economy, we are left with the legacy of these expectations in a time of fiscal restraint. The economic factor, along with the need for better coordination of services, indicates that it is both timely and necessary to reassess the full range of services which government provides.

Changes have occurred in the patterns of where people live and work. Currently, the majority of Albertans live and work in urban communities. In addition to growth in the two largest cities of Edmonton and Calgary, significant growth also has occurred in many smaller communities. Alberta now has many large towns, small and medium-sized cities, located throughout the province. Consequently, we no longer can think of only the large cities as urban communities. This growth in smaller centres has been a result of efforts to diversify the economy, and to decentralize government programs and services. At the same time, although the number of people living in rural areas has declined somewhat, services — such as hospitals, schools, recreational and cultural facilities, and improved transportation — have been made available in rural communities. These factors have encouraged many Albertans to stay in or near smaller towns and farming communities.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, thousands of people moved to Alberta from other parts of Canada and other countries to participate in the opportunities created by the unprecedented growth in Alberta's economy. Now, economic realities are such that unemployment has become a major issue of concern to Albertans and to the government. Job creation and retraining programs and the government's initiatives in developing and diversifying Alberta's economy are directed toward this issue. In the longer term, the employment prospects for Albertans are good.

The lifestyles, values and expectations of Albertans have changed as well, reflecting world-wide changes in how people live. The traditional picture of Alberta, in many ways, no longer applies. We, too, are faced with contradictions between the traditional picture and the reality of how people live. The family continues to be the basic unit of our society — it forms our foundation and provides our stability. However, the traditional view of the two-parent, two-child family — where the father is the sole wage earner, while the mother runs the household — is no longer accurate.

In fact, by 1982 only 34 per cent of husband-wife families in Alberta had just the husband as the sole income recipient. Additionally, 18 per cent of families with children at home are single parent families, most often headed by women. Our family and social lives are very different from what they were in previous generations. Increasing numbers of women participate in the labour force by necessity to support themselves and their families, or by choice to fulfill their career aspirations. The matter of quality child care is an

ongoing issue. Alberta society today is diverse, with a wide range of lifestyles, values, religions, cultures, traditions and beliefs. The diversity in lifestyles and in personal goals is an important aspect of life in Alberta today (see Appendix II)[2].

Notwithstanding major expenditures by government on social programs, we also must recognize that there are social problems affecting society — crime, teenage pregnancy, divorce, suicide, alcoholism and other substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, child abuse, and family violence. Alberta faces problems similar to those in other provinces across Canada and in other countries. These problems need a coordinated and consistent approach to provide more stability for the family. We must direct more effort at prevention to avoid the significant human and financial costs associated with these problems.

The economic downturn, coupled with restraint measures made necessary by a significant decline in provincial revenues, are of concern to Albertans. Those who have continued in positions of stable employment and income are expressing some frustration with increasing taxation. Other Albertans who have suffered as a result of changes in their employment and financial status, and who are now supported through welfare and other support systems, are concerned about their futures. In both cases, people may be experiencing a sense of powerlessness as they look for ways to improve the current situation. They share the feeling that they are victims of circumstances beyond their control.

At the same time, Albertans today have a different perspective than they had when Alberta's economy was booming in the 1970s and early 1980s. Many men and women have been strengthened and are more capable of meeting the challenges of changes in the economy. Our tradition of working hard and caring for each other has helped Albertans to recover from economic adversity and look to the future with renewed optimism.

The Alberta government recognizes these issues and the need to continue to provide leadership in building a better and stronger future. As a government, we are committed to developing the province and providing essential services, while addressing social issues of concern to Albertans in a consistent, coordinated and effective way. A contemporary social policy framework is necessary as the basis for establishing goals and priorities, and for taking decisive action.

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[2] Appendix II provides background and trend data for the province.

A Social Policy for the Future

The Government of Alberta has developed the following statement of social policy:

The Government of Alberta recognizes that social and economic development are inseparable. It is committed to building on our tradition of caring for each other and ensuring a quality of life in which all Albertans can participate democratically and share fully on equal terms in the rich cultural, economic, and social diversity of their province and in its future development.

The government will provide the necessary leadership and overall responsibility for provincial social policies, and will provide support and resources to create an environment in which Albertans can work together, be self-reliant, and take responsibility for their own lives, their families and their communities.

Government policies and programs will be designed to promote cooperative and independent initiatives of individual Albertans while at the same time ensuring that those who, for a variety of reasons, must depend on social programs for support are able to live dignified and meaningful lives.

This statement of social policy offers a direction for the province to follow in addressing both the social and economic needs of Albertans. The future economic growth of the province depends on the development of capable and productive individuals. Indeed, social policy must lead if Albertans are to fulfill their expectations...it must form the supporting factor in the development of a strong economic environment.

The statement of social policy recognizes the desire of people to live in a humane, dignified and independent manner and reflects a philosophy that stresses individual initiative, independence and responsibility. It reflects our view that government policies, programs and services must complement and support the choices and decisions that individuals make. Finally, the statement is consistent with the tradition of this province which is built on a firm foundation of strong and enterprising citizens who are prepared to accept challenges, take decisive actions, and accept responsibility for their actions.

The purpose of this statement of social policy is to provide a framework for defining the role of government in fulfilling its responsibilities to the people of Alberta.

Role of Government

It is the role of the Government of Alberta:

- To foster a social, economic, political and cultural environment in which Albertans are able to participate fully in their society;
- To promote a dignified and humane society in which Albertans are assured high standards of education, health, personal safety and security, and protection of their fundamental freedoms;
- To foster individual self-reliance and provide positive opportunities for individuals to achieve their personal goals, to take responsibility for their actions, and to be contributing and caring members of Alberta society;
- To promote a society which respects the beliefs, values, worth, and contributions of all individuals and allows them to participate fully in all aspects of Alberta life;
- To provide equitable opportunities for all Albertans, on the basis of their needs, to access government programs;
- To ensure that Albertans have access to quality programs and services in essential areas of government responsibility such as education, health care, and justice;
- To provide special programs and support to those who, for a variety of reasons, may need either temporary or permanent assistance;
- To foster and support a social and economic environment in which Alberta continues to grow and prosper, while generating the resources necessary for the implementation of effective programs and services for Albertans;
- To foster the growth and enrichment of Alberta's cultural heritage in an environment which supports the development of the artistic and cultural talents of Albertans, and to support recreational and leisure activities which contribute to the quality of life in Alberta;

- To protect the environment of Alberta and to ensure that government policies are directed toward enhancing its natural beauty and quality;
- To demonstrate good stewardship over the resources of Alberta in the best interests of present and future Albertans; and
- To work cooperatively with the federal government, other provinces and municipal governments in areas of shared responsibility in order to ensure that the needs of Albertans are addressed and that they receive their fair share of benefits and support.

These important statements describe both the role and the challenges that face this government. Fulfilling these roles requires the deliberate and dedicated actions of a government committed to building a strong future for Alberta. Just as importantly, meeting these challenges requires the full and active participation of all Albertans.

Responsibility of Government

Within the context of both the statement of social policy and the role of government which have been articulated, government must review the various programs and policies it has developed. Principles have been developed to guide the review of existing programs, and the identification and implementation of new programs.

Principles

- Government policies and programs must promote and facilitate individual initiative and self-reliance, self-sufficiency and responsibility.
- Government policies and programs must recognize the paramount importance of the family as the basic unit of our society and the diversity of family structures, and must support and strengthen the role of the family in Alberta society.
- Government policies must enable individuals, families and communities to build on our strong tradition of volunteerism, and to take increasing responsibility for caring for themselves and for those in need of help and support.
- Government policies and programs should involve, to the extent possible, communities and community agencies in the development, delivery, and evaluation of services to Albertans.
- Government policies and programs must support and complement private business, industry and community agencies, and provide an environment in which the private sector can work cooperatively with government in meeting the needs of Albertans.
- Government policies must support the individual's ability to make choices and decisions.
- Government policies and programs must be adaptable and responsive to the changing needs of Albertans.
- Government policies and programs must focus on the development of strategies that address the causes of social and health problems and the ways of preventing their occurrence.
- Priorities for government services and programs should be established on the basis of responding to the greatest needs; should take into consideration the financial circumstances of the individuals affected; and, where possible, should be designed to help individuals regain their self-sufficiency and independence.

- The development of policies and programs must involve Albertans actively in describing issues and in considering alternatives; and once policies are developed, Albertans must be well informed about the programs and services available to them.
- Government policies and programs requiring inter-departmental cooperation must operate without duplication and as smoothly as possible for the consumer.

Conclusion

This document provides the framework for social policy in Alberta. It will be used to review and refine existing programs. It sets clear guidelines for developing new programs and services. It forms the basis for future planning and gives direction for taking action. Over the course of the next few years, priorities of this government for action will reflect our commitment to meeting the goals set out in this policy statement.

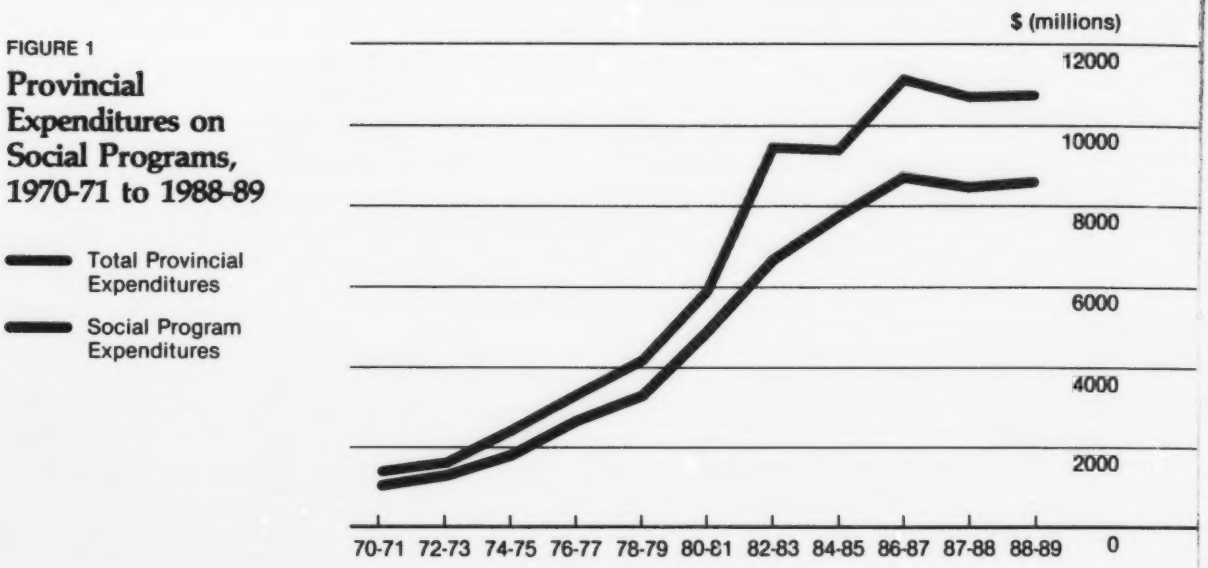
Alberta's social programs and services exist for the betterment and enrichment of its people. This can best be accomplished if they are consistent with and reflect the statement on social policy, and the role and responsibility of government in effecting that policy.

Alberta is a beautiful province — rich in resources and great in potential. Its most significant strength is its people — people who are willing to work together and to take responsibility; people who are prepared to meet challenges head-on; people who are committed to this province and to themselves. Through the implementation of this social policy statement and those actions flowing from the policy, the Government of Alberta will continue to build on the strengths that are so much a part of our history and of our outlook for the future.

Appendix I
Social Programs in Alberta

FIGURE 1

Provincial Expenditures on Social Programs, 1970-71 to 1988-89



Note: 1987-88 are forecasted expenditures.
1988-89 are projected expenditures.

Source: Government Estimates and Capital Fund Estimates, Alberta, 1970-71 to 1988-89

Trend Highlights

1. The Alberta government's total expenditures have increased from $1.1 billion in 1970-71 to an estimated $10.49 billion in 1988-89.

   The provincial expenditures on social programs have increased from $700 million in 1970-71 to an estimated $8.3 billion in 1988-89.

2. Over the last 19 years, social program expenditures were, on average, 77 per cent of total provincial expenditures. The lowest percentage of provincial expenditures devoted to social programs occurred in 1970-71 at 65 per cent, and the highest occurred in 1984-85 at 82 per cent. The forecast expenditure on social programs in 1988-89 represents 79 per cent of the total provincial budget, excluding Heritage Capital Fund Projects.

3. In 1988-89, the forecast social program expenditures are as follows for the four major categories of social programs:

Area	Percentage of Total Forecasted Provincial Expenditures*
Health	**26.4%**
Education	**23.1%**
Social Services	**12.9%**
General Community Support (e.g., environment, leisure, housing, justice, municipal services, insurance)	**16.6%**
	79.0%

* Source: Budget Address 1988, Alberta, page 35

Social Programs in Alberta, 1988-89

This section illustrates the range of social programs currently provided in Alberta. In each of the four major categories of social programs, the forecast expenditures in relation to the total forecast provincial expenditures in 1988-89 appear in brackets.

EDUCATION (23.1%)

- Elementary
- Secondary
- Post Secondary
- Vocational
- Consumer Education
- Libraries
- Student Assistance

HEALTH (26.4%)

- Cancer Control
- Community Hygiene
- Dental Health
- Mental Health
- Immunization
- Maternal Health
- School Health
- Pre-school Appraisals
- Home Nursing Care
- Diabetes Control
- Tuberculosis Control
- Pharmacy Services
- Medical Insurance
- Addiction Services
- Vital Statistics
- General Health Services
- Hospital Administration
- Occupational Health and Safety

SOCIAL SERVICES (12.9%)

- General Welfare Assistance
- Child Protection
- Child Welfare
- Rehabilitation
- Speech Therapy
- Nutrition Services
- Audiology
- Early Childhood Development/ Day Care
- Services to the Mentally Retarded
- Home/Community/ Institutionally-Based Services to the Elderly
- Funding to Community Social Services Agencies
- Aids to Daily Living

GENERAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT (16.6%)

Justice
- Correctional Services
- Probation Services
- Consumer Services
- Corporations Regulation
- Insurance Regulation
- Securities Regulation
- Supreme Court
- Provincial Court
- Family Court
- Policing and Law Enforcement
- Property Rights
- Fatality Inquiries
- Crimes Compensation
- Legal Aid

Community Affairs
- Municipal Relations
- Municipal Grants
- Housing
- Community Planning
- Recreation
- Sport and Fitness

Citizen Involvement and Rights
- Native Support
- Individual's Rights Protection
- Labour Relations
- Women's Advisory Council

Government Programs Directed Toward Women
- Women's Secretariat Grant Fund
- Women's Secretariat Persons Case Scholarship Program
- Women's Career Resource Centre
- Stepping Stones (role model program under development)

Cultural Affairs
- Arts, Heritage, and Cultural Support
- Cultural Development

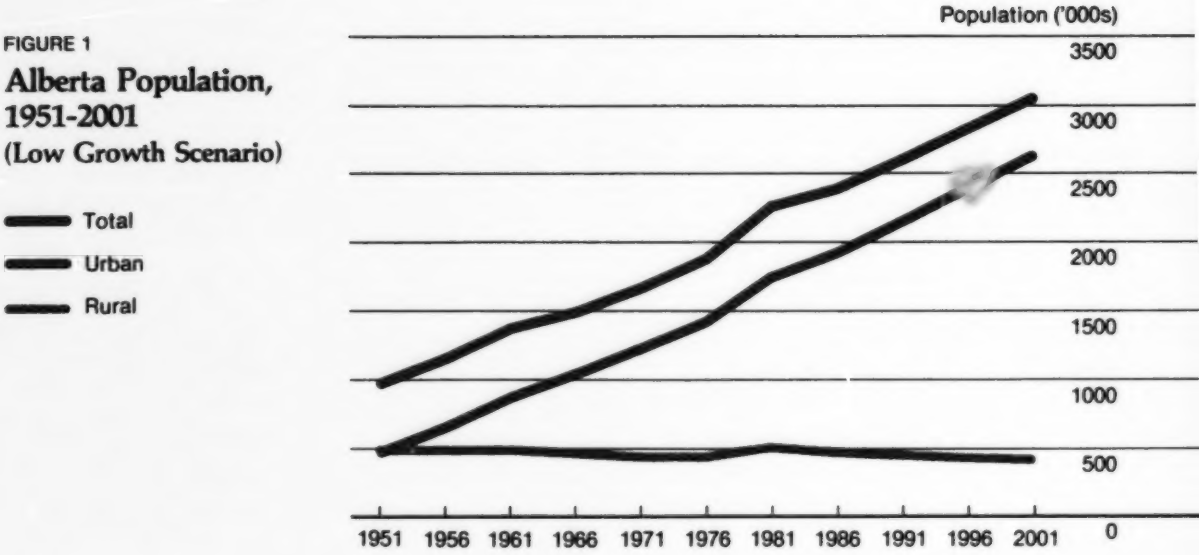
Environment
- Pollution Prevention and Control
- Land, Forest, Fish, Wildlife, and Water Resources Management

Appendix II
Background Statistics

Figure 1	Alberta Population, 1951-2001 (Low Growth Scenario)
Figure 2	Alberta Population by Age Cohort (Low Growth Scenario), 1971-2016
Figure 3	Percentage Distribution of Alberta Population, 15 Years and Over by Educational Attainment, 1975-1986
Figure 4	Per Cent Change in Gross Domestic Product, Alberta and Canada, 1971-1986
Figure 5	Comparison of Unemployment Rates, Alberta and Canada, 1970-1988
Figure 6	Male/Female Participation Rates, Alberta, 1972-1987
Figure 7	Average Family Income, Alberta and Canada, 1971-1986
Figure 8	Average Family Income (1985 $), Alberta and Canada, 1971-1985
Figure 9	Percentage Distribution of Family Income Ranges, 1981-1986, Alberta
Figure 10	Alberta Social Welfare Recipients, 1976-1987

FIGURE 1

Alberta Population, 1951-2001
(Low Growth Scenario)



Urban Area: An area with a population concentration of 1,000 or more, and a population density of 400 or more per square mile.
Rural Area: All territories lying outside urban areas.

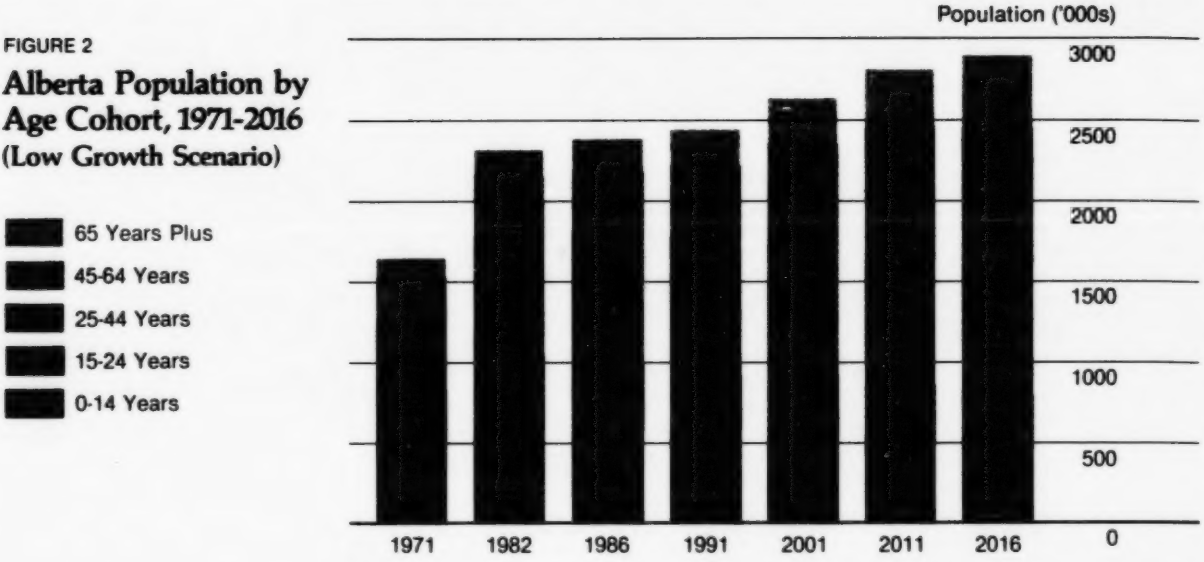
Sources: Alberta Bureau of Statistics; 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981 Census of Canada.

Trend Highlights

1. The rate of increase in Alberta's population is steadily declining. During the period 1987-2001 (based on a low growth scenario), the population is projected to grow by 13.7 per cent at an average annual rate of approximately 0.9 per cent. During the late 1970s, the average annual rate of growth was more than 4 per cent. Based on the 1986 Census, Alberta led the nation with a growth of 6.1 per cent between 1981 and 1986. This is significantly lower than the growth of 21.7 per cent registered during the 1976-81 period in Alberta.
2. Natural increase has been fairly constant in recent years, while migration has changed from a large inflow in the late 1970s and early 1980s to a net outflow in recent years. As birthrates continue to decline, migration will be a more influential factor than natural increase in determining the rate of population growth.
3. The urban population has increased dramatically. For example, the metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary which experienced growth rates of 33.7 per cent and 33.2 per cent during the 1976-81 period, grew by 6.0 per cent and 7.2 per cent respectively between 1981 and 1986. The combined populations of Edmonton and Calgary increased by 61 per cent from 1976 to 1986, an increase of approximately 550,000 people. A similar percentage increase was experienced in the combined populations of Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer and St. Albert — a combined increase of 250,000 people over the 10 year period. It is expected that the rate of urban growth will continue.
4. Conversely, the rural population of Alberta is projected to decline as people move from rural areas to urban areas. Alberta's rural population is projected to decline from 23 per cent in 1981 to less than 14 per cent in 2001, a net decrease of 92,246. While the overall trend indicates a declining rural population, it should be noted that many rural areas have stable populations while others are experiencing growth.

FIGURE 2

Alberta Population by Age Cohort, 1971-2016 (Low Growth Scenario)



Sources: Alberta Bureau of Statistics, "Alberta Population Projections Update, 1986-2011"; "Alberta Population Projections, Both Sexes, 1987-2016" (March 1988).

Trend Highlights

1. The 0-14 years age group, which had reached a peak of 35.6 per cent in 1964 comprised 24 per cent of Alberta's population in 1986 and is forecast to decline to approximately 15.5 per cent by the year 2016. Also forecast is an increasing proportion of the total population in the labour force age group (25-64 years), and a decline in the younger working age population (15-24 years).

2. In 1986, 8 per cent of Alberta's population was over 65 years of age. By the year 2016 this percentage is forecast to grow to 15.9 per cent. The median age of the total population is expected to increase from 29 years in 1986 to between 35 and 38 years in 2006, a further indicator of an aging population.

   Contributing to an aging population is the increased life expectancy of Albertans. In 1981, the life expectancy was 71.96 years for males and 79.06 years for females. In 1984, this had increased to 73.51 years for males and 80.18 years for females. During the period 2001-2016, the life expectancy for Alberta males is projected to increase to 78.5 years, and 83.7 years for females.

   The number of people 15-64 years of age supporting one person 65 years of age or over is estimated to decline from 8.4 persons in 1971 to 6.4 persons in 2011.

3. The number of children per family is declining and families are becoming smaller. The birthrate has fallen from nearly 4 births per woman in the 1950s to 1.9 births per woman in 1986, and this is projected to decline to 1.4 births in 2016. The average size of the Alberta family declined from 3.7 persons in 1971 to 3.2 persons in 1986, and is forecast to drop to 2.48 persons by 2006. The number of families without children is also increasing.

4. The number of divorces in Alberta increased from 3,656 (a rate of 224.6 per 100,000) in 1971 to 8,102 (or 345 per 100,000) in 1985, the highest in Canada.

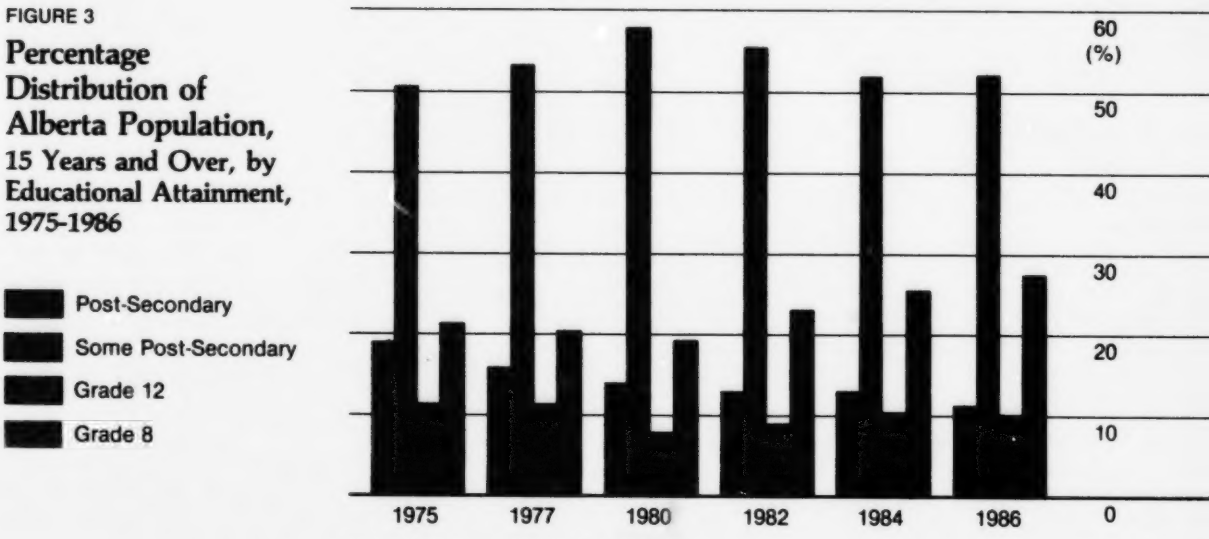
5. The declining fertility rates and increased number of divorces have affected the structure of families in Alberta. For example, in 1976, 9.2 per cent of all families in Alberta were single parent families, and this increased to 11.8 per cent in 1986, the highest in the nation. The vast majority of single parent families were headed by females, 82.3 per cent in 1986.

   One outcome of the changes in the family structure and the rising rate of female participation in the labour force has been an increase in the number of "latchkey" children. The Special Committee on Child Care established by the House of Commons in November, 1985 estimated that approximately 15.2 per cent of children ages 6-12 years in the western provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba in 1986 were "latchkey" children or not supervised by an adult after school. Based on this estimate, of the 242,000 children ages 6-12 years in Alberta in 1986, approximately 37,000 were probably "latchkey" children.

6. The total population 0-19 years of age was 750,700 in 1986, is estimated to decline to 746,300 in 1996, and further decline to 612,800 in 2016. Based on a low growth scenario, the projected enrollment of Early Childhood Services Program to Grade 12 students is estimated to increase from the 1987-88 total of 464,442 students to 490,472 students in 2000-2001. There are many reasons for this, including that students will stay in school longer in order to improve their chances for higher education and employment opportunities.

FIGURE 3

Percentage Distribution of Alberta Population, 15 Years and Over, by Educational Attainment, 1975-1986



Note: Post-Secondary includes University.

Source: Statistics Canada, "Estimates by Educational Attainment, Annual Averages", *The Labour Force*, Catalogue No. 71-001.

Trend Highlights

1. The educational attainment rate in the province has increased as demonstrated in Figure 3:

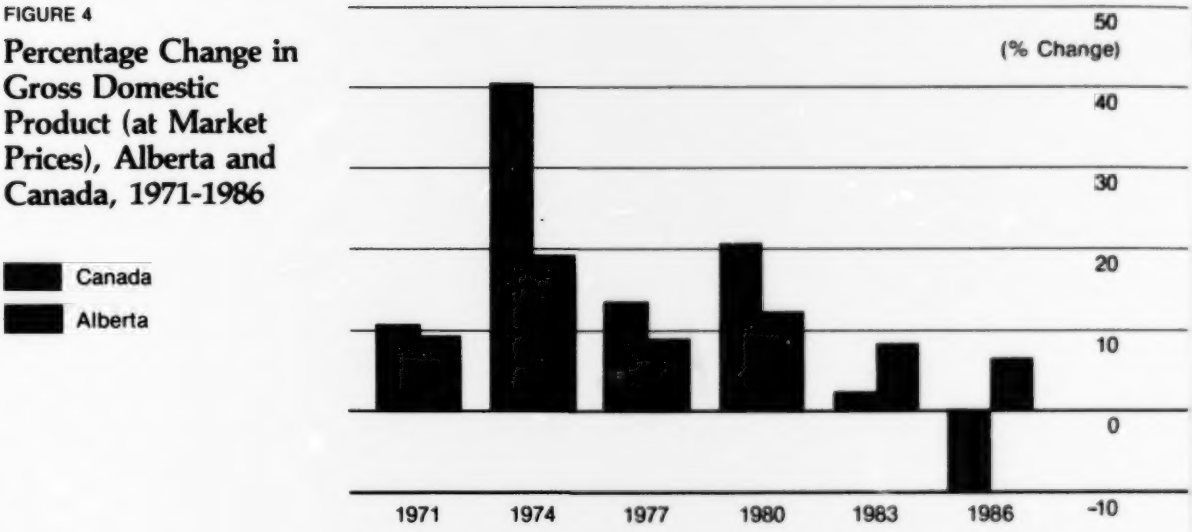
   - the percentage of the population with grade 8 or less education has declined from 19 per cent in 1975 to approximately 11 per cent in 1986;

- the proportion of the population with grade 12 education has remained relatively constant at approximately 50 per cent over the last 11 years; and
- over the same period, the proportion of the population with some post-secondary education has declined from 11 per cent to 10 per cent, but those with a post-secondary education increased from 13 per cent to 15 per cent.

2. Alberta has proportionately more people with university degrees than has any other province in Canada. Between 1975 and 1986 the percentage of Albertans with a university degree increased from 8 per cent to 13 per cent.

FIGURE 4

Percentage Change in Gross Domestic Product (at Market Prices), Alberta and Canada, 1971-1986



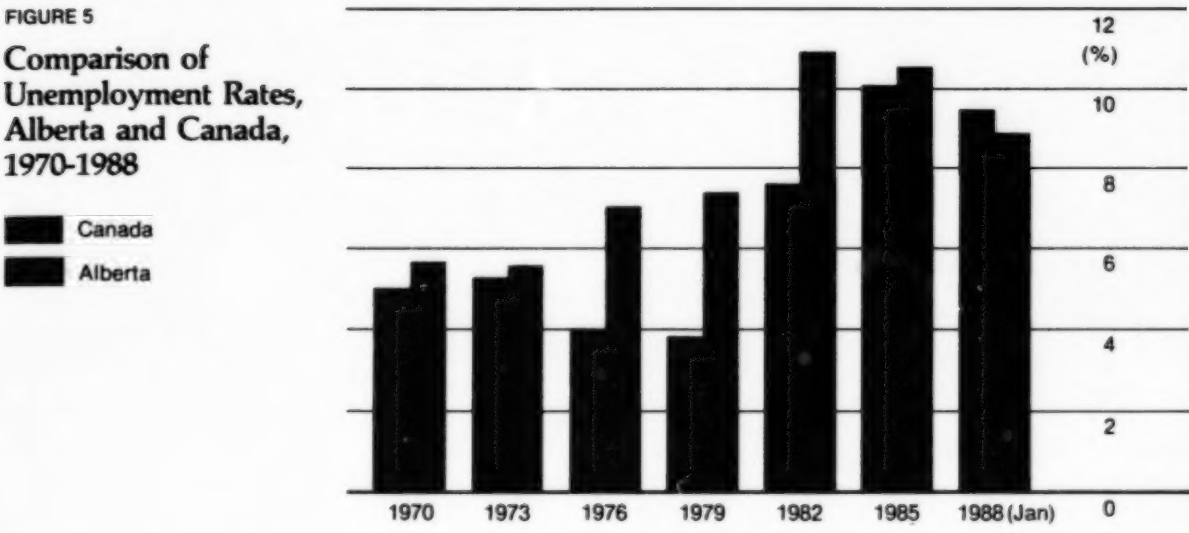
Sources: Alberta Bureau of Statistics, "Alberta Economic Accounts, 1985"; Alberta Gross Domestic Product (1986), Preliminary Estimates, January 1988.

Trend Highlights

1. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is an indicator of overall economic performance. The growth in the Alberta GDP exceeded that of Canada up to 1982, when it started to lag behind. Since 1982, the growth in Alberta's GDP has been at its lowest in 15 years, and matched a related decline in the growth of the country's GDP. Improvement occurred in 1985 when the growth in Alberta's GDP closely matched that of Canada, but the decline in the price of oil in 1986 contributed to a 9.6 per cent drop in the Alberta figure. The Conference Board of Canada predicts in their Winter 1988 "Provincial Outlook" that Alberta's economy will grow at a faster pace than the national average in 1988.
2. In summary, the economy of Alberta has changed considerably during the past 30 years. The agricultural sector no longer provides the fall-back position that it once did, declining in relative importance as the world supply and markets for these products have changed. This has been offset, to a degree, by an increase in the production of finished agricultural and forestry products in Alberta. There has been growth in other areas such as tourism, film and video industry, fashion industry, telecommunications and electronic products, pharmaceutical and medical products, and the engineering and software industries. There has also been a significant growth in the finance industry. The price of oil continues to be a major economic factor in the Alberta economy.

FIGURE 5

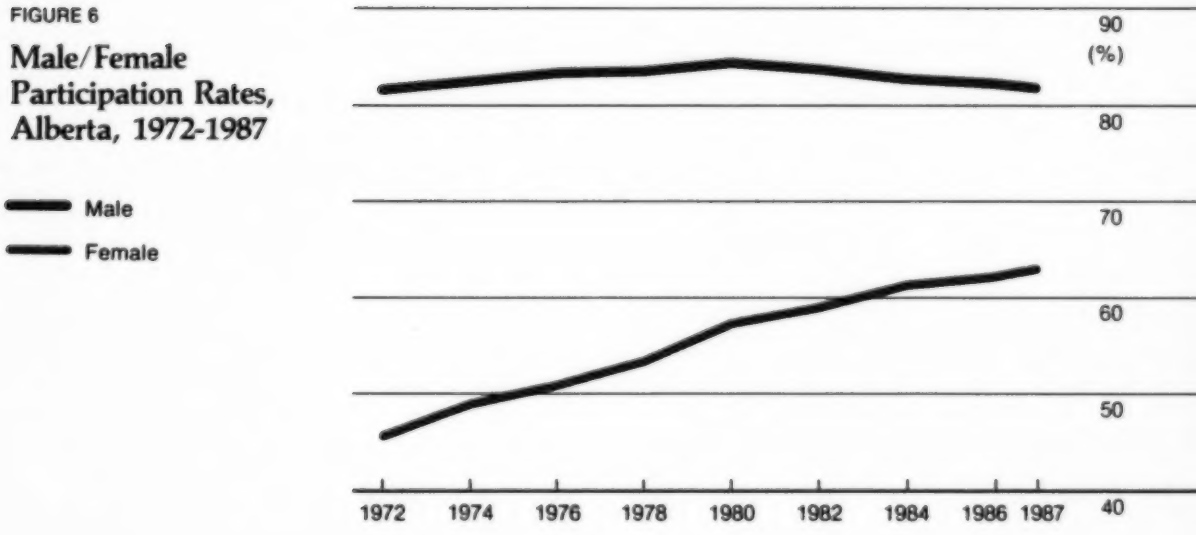
Comparison of Unemployment Rates, Alberta and Canada, 1970-1988



Sources: Statistics Canada, "Historical Labour Statistics", Catalogue No. 71-201 Annual, and "Labour Force Characteristics", Catalogue No. 71-001 Monthly; The Conference Board of Canada, Quarterly Provincial Forecast, April 14, 1987.

FIGURE 6

Male/Female Participation Rates, Alberta, 1972-1987



Sources: Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 71-001 Monthly and 71-201 Annual.

Trend Highlights (Figures 5 and 6)

1. The growth of the labour force in Alberta from 1975 to 1980 was approximately 6.5 per cent per year. With the decline of oil prices and the onset of economic instability in Canada, growth in the labour force in Alberta has declined sharply to an annual average of 1.2 per cent.

   The trade and service sectors of the labour force accounted for 18.4 per cent and 33.3 per cent of the labour force respectively in 1986. The trade component has remained fairly constant since 1975 while the service component has increased from 26.2 per cent of the labour force in 1975 to 33.3 per cent in 1986.

   The agricultural sector has declined from 13.6 per cent of the labour force in 1975 to 7 per cent in 1986.

2. The rate of participation in the labour force since 1975 has climbed from 66.1 per cent to 72.0 per cent in 1987, with the rate of female participation rising from 49.6 per cent in 1975 to 62.7 per cent in 1987.

   While labour force participation rates have shown an increasing trend, the participation rates for Albertans 65 years of age and over have been declining, from 14.6 per cent in 1971 to 10.7 per cent in 1986. This appears to mirror a national trend toward retirement before the age of 65 years.

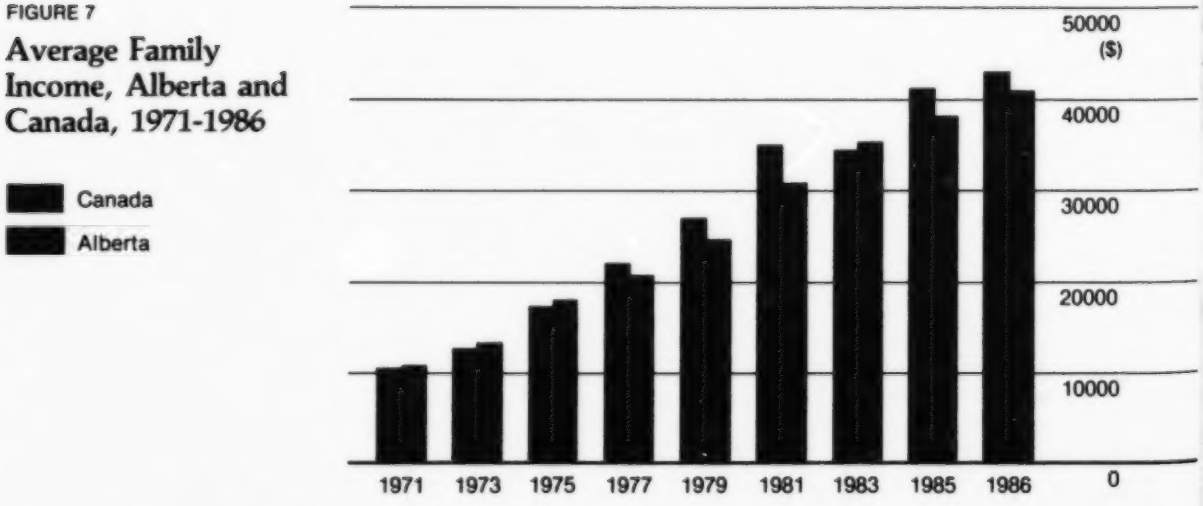
3. Unemployment in the province stood at 9.5 per cent in January, 1988, with the mining/fishing sector, manufacturing and construction at 11.8 per cent, 9.2 per cent and 22.2 per cent respectively.

   Part-time employment in Alberta has grown from 12.3 per cent of employment in 1975 to 16.8 per cent in January, 1988. Approximately 70 per cent of part-time employees are comprised of females. Part-time employment rises when the unemployment rate is high and tends to reflect the reduced availability of full-time employment.

   Much of the growth in employment that has occurred recently has been in the service sector and in part-time employment.

FIGURE 7

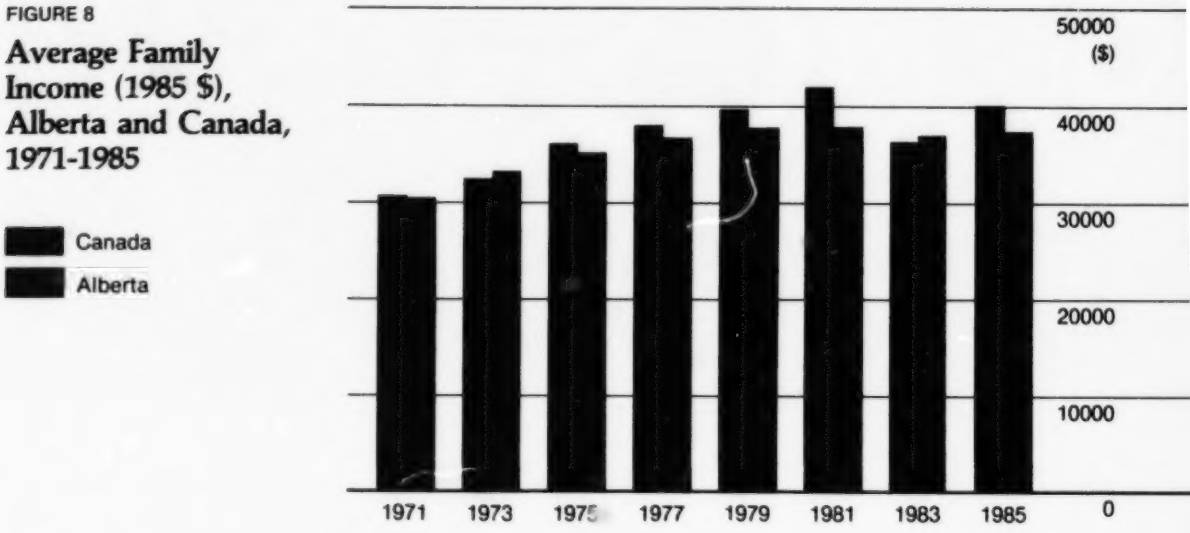
Average Family Income, Alberta and Canada, 1971-1986



Source: Statistics Canada: Income Distributions by Size in Canada. Catalogue No. 13-207 Annual.

FIGURE 8

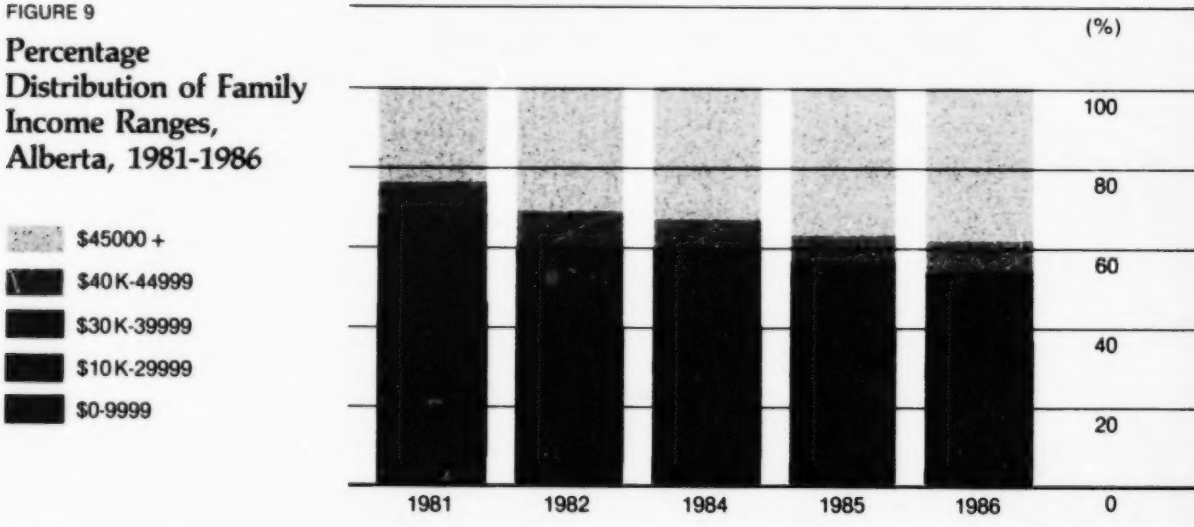
Average Family Income (1985 $), Alberta and Canada, 1971-1985



Source: Alberta Bureau of Statistics

FIGURE 9

Percentage Distribution of Family Income Ranges, Alberta, 1981-1986



Source: Statistics Canada: Income Distributions by Size in Canada. Catalogue No. 13-207 Annual.

Trend Highlights (Figures 7, 8, and 9)

1. Between 1972 and 1981, increases in the per capita personal disposable income in Alberta were greater than those for Canada as a whole. In 1975, the Alberta per capita figure began to exceed that of Canada. In 1982, however, growth in Alberta's per capita disposable income slowed as a result of the decline in the oil and gas sector, and the rate of increase fell below the rate of Canada.
2. Average family incomes in 1985 dollars peaked in 1981 and fell in 1984. While some recovery has taken place, average family income in 1985 in real terms was 7 per cent below that of 1982.

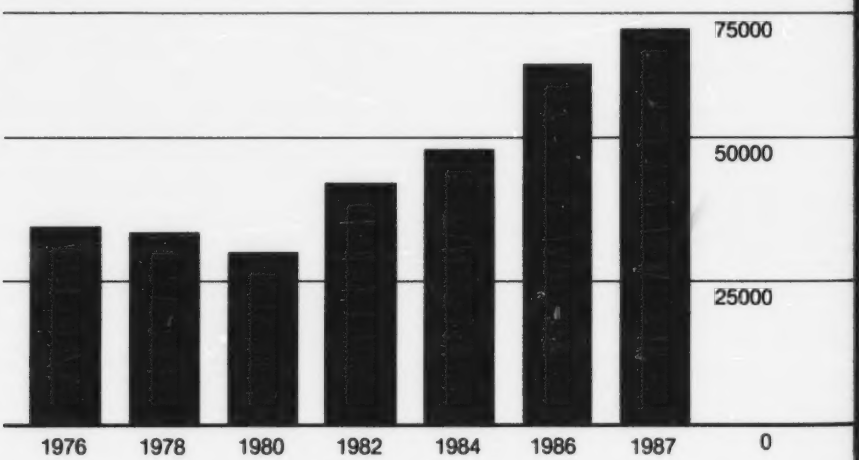
3. The growth in family incomes in Alberta has been affected by the increasing rate of participation of women in the work force, particularly those with children. The percentage of working women in the total labour force is higher in Alberta than in the rest of Canada.
4. The percentage of Alberta families earning less than $10,000 declined slightly from 6.6 per cent in 1981 to 3.8 per cent in 1986, while the proportion earning more than $45,000 had increased from 24.3 per cent to 39.3 per cent. Between 1981 and 1982 there was an overall upward shift in family earnings evidenced by the increased numbers of families earning $35,000 or more. However, by 1982, family earnings lost ground and the percentage earning less than $10,000 again increased. In 1985 there was some improvement in family incomes.
5. In 1981, the low income cut-off levels for a family of four were $12,035 for those living in a rural area, $13,521 for those living in an urban area of less than 30,000 population, and $16,361 for those living in an urban centre of 500,000 population or more. Eight per cent of all Albertan families had incomes below these levels.

   In 1985, the corresponding low income cut-off levels were $15,310, $17,200 and $20,812 respectively. Twelve and one-half per cent of all Albertans had incomes below these levels.
6. In Alberta, the number of children from low income families increased from 69,670 (or 11.7 per cent) in 1981 to 131,180 (or 21.9 per cent) in 1984, but declined to 119,930 (or 19.5 per cent) in 1985, and to 93,640 (or 15.6 per cent) in 1986.

FIGURE 10

Alberta Social Welfare Recipients, 1976-1987

(Monthly Average)



Note: The 1987 bar represents the average number of monthly recipients for the first 5 months of 1987.

Source: Alberta Social Services

Trend Highlights

1. The number of Albertans on social assistance has increased, with corresponding increases in costs.

   The number of welfare cases increased from 34,300 in 1976 to 62,800 in 1986 — an increase of 83.1 per cent. (In May, 1987, this rose to 70,800 cases.) During the same period, the total population increased from 1.8 million in 1976 to 2.4 million in 1986, an increase of 29.6 per cent.

   The cost per year increased from $131.3 million in 1976 to $524.3 million in 1986.